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## WHAT IS GOOD FOR AN ARTIST, AND WHAT AN ARTIST IS GOOD FOR.

BY MISS LIZZIE J. WILLIAMS.

Jabez Stockstill's son, Rubens Rembrandt, wanted to be an artist. Jabez did not like the idea; not that he objected to giving him every advantage his own hard-earned money could procure, but he wanted him to be a doctor or a minister—something that would be of some use in the world, and not a mere apology for a man. But Rubens Rembrandt was determined to be a painter, and his father was equally determined that if the boy was one at all he should have every opportunity of becoming a first-class one.

Now, the question was: "What is good for an artist?" He did not wish to give him a thorough collegiate course unless it was going to bear upon his work. He could see how a liberal education could benefit a man in any of the learned professions; but of what use it could be to a painter, or what studies he ought to pursue, he was at a loss to decide. In his perplexity he wrote to one of the deepest thinkers in the land, and was told in reply, since his son had already been sufficiently drilled on the farm, in agriculture, to put him through one of our most thorough colleges, then send him to a theological seminary and medical school; let him take a special course on mechanics and engineering, followed by a year's service in the navy (to gain a familiar acquaintance with the ocean in all its forms); then let him acquire the technical part of his profession at Cooper Institute, or some other academy of design, after which he would be pretty well prepared *to begin* the study of Art, provided he had a common amount of talent and an uncommon amount of perseverance.

Mr. Stockstill was considerably mystified by this reply, but thought he comprehended its meaning, viz.: An artist, of all men, should have the broadest culture—at once the most æsthetic and the most practical, the most profound and the most popular.

Take the studies in the curriculum of any of our best colleges—hardly one that does not bear directly upon his life work. What surgeon needs more than he a careful and exhaustive study of Anatomy, without which it is impossible to draw the human figure correctly. It is now taught in all schools of design; the position and play of each muscle thoroughly understood, as well as the skeleton which underlies them. And what Anatomy is to the Figure Painter,

such is Geology to a Landscape Artist. For all the different varieties of scenery, woods with pleasant avenues, sweet footpaths winding through soft pastures, rivulet and river, nestling village, and pines rearing themselves upon the crests of mountains, may be considered as a garment spread by God's hand from one edge of the horizon to the other, and drooping like the folds of a mantle from a King's shoulders. For all this is merely the drapery of the earth, and it again is sustained and shaped by the rocks, as the muscles are by the bones. Therefore the soil cannot be rightly drawn without a scientific knowledge of the rocks which govern it. Again, if one has any ambition to paint trees, (and in what picture do they not occur?) a knowledge of Botany is indispensable. How many pictures have we seen in which it was not only impossible to tell whether the trees represented were oak, pine, palmetto or crab-apple, but where every law of tree-growth was violated, and the result a huge monstrosity and absurdity, calculated to fill the mind with disgust instead of admiration. Either of these two points might be enlarged upon and have been with absorbing interest, by Ruskin, in volumes four and five of his "Modern Painters."

Who would dare to say he had painted water correctly, without an intimate acquaintance with the laws which govern varied forms? These are best investigated by Natural Philosophy, under Hydraulics and Hydrostatics. "Yes," says our friend Mr. Stockstill, "I can see how the sciences which investigate *Nature* bear directly on the subject, but what have your pure Mathematics, and your Greek and Latin got to do with the matter?"

Much, every way. Geometry is involved in all Architectural designs; they cannot be demonstrated without it; and Perspective, as difficult a branch of Mathematics as Conic Sections, comes in at every view in which distance is at all considered. In regard to the Classics, nearly all our higher culture in Art is attained by a study of the Antique. What possible veneration can one have for the masterpieces of Phidias or Praxiteles without an acquaintance with the age in which they lived, their manners, customs, literature, thoughts, religion? The Greek Mythology, the most poetic and fantastic which the world has ever known, was the direct inspiration of the statues and has been handed down to us, still unsurpassed, as models of loveliness and ideals of perfect beauty. Who can behold Raphael's frescoes in the Farnese Palace, of Cupid and Psyche, and appreciate half the exquisite design without understanding the Greek Fable? What meaning would that convey to one unacquainted with the mode of Greek thought? How grasp the delicate,

hidden idea embodied in the statues of the Venus di Medici, the Venus di Milo, (to properly introduce which, Baron Grimm has written so many æsthetic and metaphysical essays,) the Apollo Belvedere, Michael Angelo's "Bacchus," the Farnese Hercules, the Minerva of Phidias, or the writhing agony of Laocoon? It can only be done by placing ourselves as nearly as possible at the Greek standpoint. To accomplish this, *one* method alone remains to us,—a careful study of Greek Literature. The spirit of the age, it seems to me, is making a great mistake in throwing this element of culture out of its practical education; however this may be, to one who aspires to *high Art* such culture is of inestimable value.

We have now completed the curriculum of an ordinary college, and found every department bearing directly toward the end we have in view for our young friend, Rubens Rembrandt. Not that he should complete all these studies before venturing upon the practical; let him cultivate his hand at the same time with his intellect, and taste. Only let him learn through the crayon and brush, facile and ready expression of the ideas these studies have been developing, and he *cannot help* being an Artist. But with all the heir-ship of genius Nature has bestowed as a birth-right, and all the mechanical dexterity attained by patient practice, without these mental acquisitions he will never become an artist, but will forever remain a mere Artisan.

Further, Mr. Stockstill's adviser said that having completed a collegiate course it would be of advantage to Rubens Rembrandt to study Divinity. Doctrinal Theology, perhaps not; (it is a question whether it is an advantage to our clergymen;) but a close study of the life and teachings of Christ, emphatically, *yes*. Nearly all of the great Artists have modeled their lives after His. What more lovely than the sweet, calm enthusiasm of the cloistered life of Fra Angelico, a saint as truly inspired as the Apostle John; for each in his cloistered life saw the heavens opened, and left behind him records of his beatific visions. What more grandly sublime than the unapproachably heroic, and self-sacrificing life of Michael Angelo? Steadfast, unmovable, strong to endure, mighty in power, misunderstood and solitary save when "an angel was sent to strengthen him." An Artist's sympathy with his race must be broad, out-reaching like that of his Master's. If he could catch the most delicate expressions of feeling, and transfer them to canvas accurately, he must be "a partaker of the Divine Nature," an apt scholar of the Great Teacher. True there have been Artists of dissolute lives; their works show it; but all these "died young, or painted ill when old."

Our sensible, practical friend, Mr. Stockstill, asks another question: "What is an artist good for?"

After I have given Rubens Rembrandt the expensive education you advise, and the advantage of Art-school besides, of what earthly use will he be in a busy, work-a-day world like this? Will he be an ornamental superfluity, only fit to talk "tone, old masters, the Renaissance and pre-Raphaelitism" in the drawing-room, or a wild enthusiast who never combs his hair, and taking a great white umbrella, plants himself in some waste and solitary place, daubs furiously canvases which unpainted cost \$2.50, and painted cannot be sold for twenty-five cents? Nothing of the sort. After leaving the halls of his Alma Mater he will be ready and proud to step into a carpenter's shop, and having served a short apprenticeship at the bench, a new sign will appear on one of the streets of your village, R. R. Stockstill, Architect and Builder, and that town will owe more to you in the gothic arches of its churches, its commodious school houses, imposing court house, elegant music hall, palatial villas and exquisite gems of cottages,—a thousandfold more to you, sir, or to the education you have given your son, than if you had invested the money it cost you in city bonds and burned them on the spot.

Or he may become an inventor of machinery, and by some lucky patent make all your fortunes. Or he may become a Bridge Builder, or a Designer, and of this class the name is legion. I will enumerate only a few of the different departments, in each of which there is a steady demand for designers of cultivated artistic tastes. First, Engravers and chasers in gold and silver. A lady in Philadelphia has laid by a snug little fortune by chasing the backs of gold watches. She easily earned \$1 per hour. It is light work, but requires skill in drawing. There are but few first-class engravers, and the demand for engraved jewelry and silverware is on the increase.

Another branch of the same business is that of the lapidary and cameo-cutter. There are two kinds of cameo-cutting—one with a lapidary's wheel of hard stones, as the onyx and the sardonyx; but the more common are the shell-cameos, which are cut with small steel chisels from the white portion of the shell, leaving the chocolate color for the back ground. In Mrs. Lee's "Sculpture and Sculptors," we find an account of those who have engaged in cameo-cutting in the United States. Then we have ivory cutters and pearl-workers, and workers in the Intaglio and Mosaic. "A great deal of money is expended on monuments, but there is a lack of variety in the designs," and marble, under any circumstances, is a noble field for the artist.

Plaster statuary, we are told from reliable authority, gives lucrative employment in our large cities, to those who are adept in geometrical figures and drawing. Inventive talent finds a ready field for exercise, while the study of architectural ornaments and books is a great advantage to an expert with a pencil. Designers are employed in all glass companies, in carpet factories and calico mills. In these departments a person of lively fancy and nice powers of discrimination succeeds best. Gay, rich, dark colors are not suitable for summer, nor light, delicate shades for winter. Designers of quick perception originate the most tasteful dress goods. In the Report of the Philadelphia School of Design it is stated that one of the ladies of that school received \$60 for a design for wall-paper; they seldom bring so much, however, the usual price being from \$12 to \$20. This is almost entirely monopolized by the French. One leading manufactory gets its patterns from the School of Design in Paris, and another New York firm pays a Frenchman \$1,000 a year, the same man receiving \$3,000 per annum for designing in another manufactory.

China decorators and porcelain painters are finding employment in the United States, though for want of cultivated and imaginative designers the European work still excels in beauty and elegance. The porcelain of Japan is most durable, that of France most ornamental. The delicate lace-work in Dresden china is executed by women. In all these departments the demand is not so much for mere mechanical skill as for highly cultivated ideas and refined tastes that give back their own image; as "Nature is the glass reflecting God."

Fresco painting is becoming a steady employment in our larger cities, and requires a wide range of culture, as well as a vivid conception for the artist to become eminent in the profession. Landscape gardeners are loudly called for. These can only distinguish themselves by being in harmony with nature and diversity of climate—a field as vast as the globe, embracing a knowledge of both vegetable and animal kingdom, without which most egregious blunders will occur. Mr. Demas "Ignoramus" paid a fabulous sum for one of God's master-pieces on College Hill, Cincinnati. The creator had terraced its slopes with His own hand, planted the red-bud and hung the scarlet bitter-sweet, which are unsurpassed in beauty in Ohio. Nothing was wanting, save a few statues of native, wild animals artistically interspersed, to keep the landscape intact. What does the barbarian do, but order his gardener (a man of far more culture than himself) to cut down his most valuable trees and fill up the ravine to a dead level.

Lithographers, steel engravers, copper-plate engravers, map engravers, bank-note engravers, card engravers, seal engravers, and so forth ad infinitum, are in constant demand. The Director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts says: "*Skill* in drawing is a key that admits to a wider range of art than I can readily enumerate, and successful and profitable employment in engraving depends on *that*." Further, he says that "Whatever branch of the Fine Arts is to be followed, there are three requisites. The first is drawing, the second is *drawing*, and the third is DRAWING." In short, the industrial appliances of art are almost innumerable. The occupation into which it does not enter to some extent is an exception. Take a very simple example. Color-blindness is a more common misfortune than ordinarily supposed. The colors generally confused are green and red; yet these are the very ones used as railroad signals. So that a great railroad catastrophe may be the result of a locomotive engineer not having "an eye for color."

It is little estimated how much Art has to do with the politics of the day. The Tammany Ring owes the contempt now felt for its corruption principally to Nast's caricatures of Tweed, Sweeny, and others.

Mr. Greeley's defeat was in a great measure owing to the comic pages of the illustrated newspapers.

This power of caricature may be more fully appreciated by a study of the Masters in this department.

Cruikshank, the accepted portrayer of Dickens's characters—Gustavus Dore, is unrivaled here. Chane, the author of the comicalities in Le Mode Illustré, is intensely humorous, while nothing can equal the delicate *wit* of Paul Kanewka's Silhouettes. The artist who takes off society life for Punch is irresistible.

The close connection that exists between Art and Literature is shown by the fact that so many authors illustrate their own works. Hood did so, and Thackeray is almost as noted an artist as an author. It would be hard to tell in which department to class Ruskin. Indeed, the same qualities and the same culture are required for each; both must be keen observers and highly imaginative. Take a dirty roadside pond as an example. An ordinary man knows that it is muddy and sees nothing but mud, and would express it on canvas by a great brown daub.

"A great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, and he follows it, cost what it will. He sees it is not the dull, dirty, blank thing which he supposes it to be; it has a heart as well as ourselves, and in the bottom of

that there are the boughs of the tall trees and their quivering leaves, and all the hazy passages of sunshine, the blades of the shaking grass with all manner of hues of variable, pleasant light out of the sky; and the bottom seen in the clear little bits at the edge, and the stones of it, and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle drawn as completely and more delicately they must be than the real clouds above. For the ugly gutter that stagnates over the drain-bars in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that if you will look deep enough you may see the dark, serious blue of the far off sky and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your will that you see in that despised stream either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky; so it is with many other things we unkindly despise." A painter who is a nice observer enough to notice all this, will be equally exact and discriminating in all his observations; ten to one he will be as ready in giving you a verbal account of them, as in a pictured one. Ergo, a good Artist should be an entertaining writer and an eloquent orator. Indeed, I can think of nothing with the exception of religion, as remarkable as Art for its universal adaptability, its all-preserving character. To the poor a means of support and source of rich enjoyment. To the scholar opening fields of critical study and connoisseurship, cultivating the tastes of the rich, so that their wealth is not mere vulgar display, but made the patron of luxury, which is æsthetic, and elegance which is the perfection of loveliness.

If, like religion, it enters into all our humdrum cares, beautifying our homes and glorifying the humblest occupation, what then must be the happiness of one allowed to minister as priest in the Holy of Holies, and leaving the application, devote himself exclusively to High Art? I maintain there is but one vocation equal in beauty, in honor and sacredness, to that of the Artist. That *one* is the Christian Ministry. Men there are who disgrace both callings; it seems to me to be worthy of either, a man should devote his life to the work, and be filled with such a holy passion, such a calm but overmastering enthusiasm that nothing earthly—fame, friends, fortune, happiness, applause, high honor, even love—these, or the loss of any or all of them should materially affect him. Nay, he should be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God as manifested in my most sacred calling."

Only an amateur as yet, standing as a novice at the outer gate, it

is my high ambition some day to serve within thy temple, O Art! and to add imperfect and faulty, but loving, work to that of the noble army of Artists who still praise thee.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, MANHATTAN, KAN., October, 1872.

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## METEOROLOGICAL SUMMARY FOR THE YEAR 1872.

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*By Prof. F. H. Snow, of the Lawrence State University.*

Station, Lawrence, Kansas. Latitude  $38^{\circ} 58'$ ; longitude  $95^{\circ} 16'$ . Elevation of the barometer and thermometers, 884 feet above sea level and 14 feet above the ground; rain gauge on the ground; anemometer 105 feet above the ground, on the dome of the University building.

### TEMPERATURE.

Mean temperature of the year,  $51.90^{\circ}$ , which is  $1.23^{\circ}$  lower than the mean temperature of the four preceding years. Mean temperature of the winter months,  $24.91^{\circ}$ ; of the spring,  $53.21^{\circ}$ ; of the summer,  $70.40^{\circ}$ ; of the autumn,  $51.91^{\circ}$ . The winter and spring were each four degrees colder, and the summer and autumn were each less than half a degree cooler than the corresponding seasons in the year 1871.

The mean temperature of the year 1869 was  $1.54^{\circ}$  lower than that of 1872, but in the former year the winter months were much warmer, and the summer much cooler than in the year just completed.

The mean temperature at 7 A. M.,  $44.89^{\circ}$ ; at 2 P. M.,  $61.14^{\circ}$ ; at 9 P. M.,  $94.65^{\circ}$ . The highest temperature was  $97^{\circ}$ , June 26 and August 26; the lowest,  $18^{\circ}$  below zero, December 20 and 24—giving a range of  $115^{\circ}$  for the year. The mercury fell below zero on 16 days, January 28, 29, 30 and 31, February 3, 6 and 7, November 29, and December 20 to 27, inclusive. The “cold snap” in December was the severest and longest continued on our record, the mercury on one occasion remaining below zero for 50 consecutive hours. The month of November was even colder than in 1871, the mercury sinking below zero for the first time on record for that month. Winter weather began November 13th, five days earlier than last year, and the Kansas river was closed on the 29th, two days later than last year. The coldest month of the year was December, with mean temperature of  $19.93^{\circ}$ ; the coldest week was in December, (20th to 26th, inclusive,) the mean temperature being only one-twentieth of a degree above